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ABSTRACT

Since the emergence of affirmative action and women's liberation, educators have been confronted with the disproportionately small number of women in school adminstrative positions. The task of the workship reported in this paper was to enable men and women school administrators in the central Michigan area to convene and express their views on this topic, relate the issues to their particular district, and offer strategies for increasing the number of women in school administration. (Author/MLF)

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THE ROLE OF WOMEN IN SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION WORKSHOP

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for the degree of Master of Arts

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Statement of the Problem

The majority of professional public school employees can be classified into two categories: (a) teachers and (b) administrators. The fact that a gross inproportionate number of men are employed in administrative positions leads to the questions, why aren't more women employed in administrative positions in order to bring about some balance in the male to female ratio in administrative positions? The problem of a lack of women in school administrative positions can be attributed to sex discrimination and sexist attitudes that exist in employment practices of most school districts. Would planned objectives or an affirmative action plan prepared by all local districts eliminate many of the sex discriminatory practices of employment offices and increase the number of women in school administration?

Purpose of the Workshop

The purpose of this paper is to report the findings of the workshop, THE ROLE OF WOMEN IN SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION. The purpose for such a workshop was to explore the role of women in school administration. Since the emergence of affirmative action and women's liberation, a prevailing concern about women in school administrative positions has confronted all educators. The function of the workshop was to invite women and men educators in administrative positions to participate in discussion on the role of women in school administration, listen to guest speakers' presentations on this topic, and to make recommendations and strategies for increasing the employment of women in school administration.

Definition of Terms

1. Affirmative Action - federal guidelines proposed to eliminate discrimination of women and minorities in employment. This paper refers to sex discrimination of women in employment practices only.

2. Women's Liberation - a social and political movement that concerns itself with the equality of women in all facets of life.

3. Administrative positions - this paper refers to superintendents, assistant superintendents, principals, assistant principals, community school directors, and departmental supervisors as administrative positions.

4. Workshop - a one-day program held to explore the role of women in school administration. Hereafter, the term workshop may be interchanged with the term conference.

Historical Overview

Throughout American history, women have entered public education by the back door in a sense. In colonial America, girls were excluded from formal education because it was felt that all they needed to know could be taught at home. During the eighteenth century, teaching in the dame schools was an acceptable occupation for women in financial need. These early female academies and seminaries concentrated heavily upon developing skills such as manners or music or embroidery which was regarded as feminine. However, in the nineteenth century with the emergence of the publicly supported common school, women finally gain real admittance.

This was because they supplied a cheap and readily available source of teachers for the common schools. During the latter part of the nineteenth century, drives for additional education for women were successful because they were frequently founded upon sexist arguments. For instance, a curriculum in Home Economics was a valid course of study for women because it prepared them in skills associated with their biological role. The justification of higher education for women was based on the premise that it provided future wives and mothers with a culture and knowledge that could benefit their entire families.

Today, the women in the 1970's find that equality of the sexes in the public school system is far more apparent than real. In actuality, the educational system is structured in the pattern of the home, with men running the institution and women working in it as teachers. A recent study showed that 85% of elementary teachers were women but 79% of elementary principals were men.[1] A national survey conducted in 1970-71 concluded that while 67% of all public school teachers were women, only 15% were principals and .6% were superintendents.[2]

[1] Alexander, R. Women and the American Public School. School Administrator. May 1974, pp. 16-17.

Lyon, C.D. & Saario, T.N. Women in Public Education: Sexual Discrimination in Promotions. Phi Delta Kappan. October 1973. pp. 120-123.

Another study showed the proportion of women principals declined from 37% in 1960 to 21% in 1970.[3] This historical overview of the status of women in public school education was further reason for the workshop, THE ROLE OF WOMEN IN SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION. This paper contends that there is a definite need to increase the number of women in school administration at all levels in public education. The approach used in this investigation was to conduct a workshop entitled, THE ROLE OF WOMEN IN SCHOOL ADMININISTRATION. The task of this workshop was to enable men and women school administrators in the central Michigan area to convene and express their views on this topic, to relate the issues to their particular district, and to offer strategies for increasing the number of women in school administration.

Procedure

The procedures used to administer the workshop were as follows; planning the workshop, securing a budget, setting a date, selecting speakers and participants, forwarding correspondences, planning a luncheon, and researching and collecting written material on the topic.

A questionnaire was used to gather information on the workshop. It consisted of six close ended questions to be answered by the participants with the written response of yes or no.

[3] Taylor, S.S. Educational Leadership: A Male Domain. Phi Delta Kappan. October 1973, pp. 124-128.

The seventh question was open ended and required a narrative response of the participants.

A schedule of events for the workshop was mailed to each speaker and participant. It consisted of registration with coffee and doughnuts, introduction, keynote speaker, team-work sessions, luncheon, speaker, resuming of team-work sessions, workshop evaluation, and wrap-up session.

A workshop packet was prepared and presented to speakers and participants on the day of the conference. It consisted of twelve articles of written literature on the topic of women in school administration, a scheduled program, and writing paper.

Five dollars in cash were given to each speaker and participant on the day of the conference to help defray the cost of travel and expense.

Table 1

Do you feel there was a need for this type of workshop?

	f.	%
YES	12	100
NO	0	0
TOTAL	12	100

Table 2

Did you get to talk and interact as much as you wanted during the Workshop?

	f.	%
YES	11	92
NO	1	8
TOTAL	12	100

Table 3

Do you feel this Workshop provided a start for implementing change in your district's attitude toward women in administration?

	f.	%
YES	9	75
NO	3	25
TOTAL	12	100

Table 4

Was the printed material relevant?

	f.	%
YES	11	92
NO	1	8
TOTAL	12	100

Table 5

Did you learn any new aspects as to the role of women in school administration?

	f.	%
YES	9	75
NO	3	25
TOTAL	12	100

Table 6

Were the speakers informative?

	f.	%
YES	12	100
NO	0	0
TOTAL	12	100

Discussion

The workshop was originally planned for seventeen total participants. Due to prior commitments, some participants were unable to attend the conference. Fourteen participants actually attended the workshop which constituted 82% of the total participants invited. This percentage of participants still allowed the conference to be executed as planned.

The findings from the workshop evaluation showed the following; in table 1 all participants agreed that there was a need for this type of workshop, in table 2 all but one participant agreed that they got to talk and interact as much as they wanted, in table 3 all but three or 75% of the participants felt the workshop provided a start for implementing change in their district's attitude of women in administration, in table 4 all but one participant agreed that the printed material was relevant, in table 5 all but three participants agreed that they learned new aspects as to the role of women in school administration, in table 6 all participants agreed that the speakers were informative. The seventh question on the questionnaire asked, "If you were to attend another workshop of this type, what changes would you make?" Some of the responses were as follows; would like to have the workshop on Friday evening or Saturday, include more districts so there would be more input, more interaction, two or three days of duration for in-depth study and idea development. Preferably in a relaxed atmosphere, more speakers, and more small group discussions.

The facts that further demonstrated a need for this workshop were the findings from the book, "Michigan Education Directory and Buyer's Guide 1974-75."[4] According to this directory, there are:two women superintendents in the State of Michigan, eight women assistant superintendents, and seven women high school principals. The following school districts and women administrators were identified:

Superintendents

1. Patricia Bidol, Superintendent, Baldwin Community Schools, Baldwin, Michigan.

2. Katerine Heideman, Superintendent, Houghton Intermediate School District, Houghton, Michigan.

Assistant Superintendents

1. Eleanor Piete, Assistant Superintendent Curriculum, Crestwood School District, Dearborn Heights, Michigan.

2. Ruth Turunen, Assistant Superintendent of Instruction, East Detroit School District, Detroit, Michigan.

3. Jeanette Van Riper, Assistant Superintendent Curriculum, Flat Rock Community Schools, Flat Rock, Michigan.

4. Georgia Williams, Assistant Superintendent Curriculum, Highland Park Schools, Highland Pakr, Michigan.

[4] ibid.

5. Equilla Bradford, Executive Assistant Superintendent Curriculum, Westwood Community Schools, Inkster, Michigan.

6. Florence Panalton, Assistant Superintendent, Northville Public Schools, Northville, Michigan.

7. Julia Zimmer, Assistant Superintendent for Instruction, Godwin Heights Public Schools, Wyoming, Michigan.

High School Principals

1. Marge Nordin, Principal, Brown City Community Schools, Brown City, Michigan.

2. Margaret Montgomery, Principal, Detroit Public Schools, Detroit, Michigan.

3. Natalie Kreeger, Principal, Fowlerville Community Schools, Fowlerville, Michigan.

4. Dorothy Baker, Principal, Genesee Public Schools, Genesee, Michigan.

5. Andrea Landford, Principal, Westwood Community Schools, Inkster, Michigan.

6. Donna Curtiss, Principal, Lawrence Public Schools, Lawrence, Michigan.

7. Helen Ditzhazy, Principal, Novi Community Schools, Novi, Michigan.

Summary, Conclusions and Recommendations

This report on the workshop hopefully demonstrated a need to increase the number of women in school administration.

The workshop generally indicated that sexism in employment practices was probably the most attributed factor for the small number of women in school administration.

Participants in the workshop made the following conclusions and recommendations on women in school administration:

1. Consult Michigan Department of Education for guidelines for setting up affirmative plan to eliminate sexism in employment.

2. Keep an open line of communication between institutions of higher learning and local districts to see if an available pool of prepared female individuals exist.

3. Identify the qualifiable female individuals in local districts who would be eligible for administrative positions, should they become available.

4. Form a Sexism Awareness Task Force Citizen Group to call attention to the existence of sexism attitudes and to evaluate objectives and goals for elimination of sexism.

5. Have In-Service Programs for local administrators to discuss problem of sexism.

6. Have curriculum committee to examine curriculum for sexism in this area.

7. Put women staff members in more visible leadership roles.

8. Local districts should actively recruit female administrators and phrase job descriptions carefully, avoiding sexist thinking.

9. Professional associations should give publicity to women in school administration.

10. Local districts should implement career education plans directed toward wider options in administration for women and men.

In the article "Women in Public Education: Sexual Discimination in Promotions", the authors gave twenty-one recommendations for local school districts, state departments of education and schools of education to eliminate sexism in employment.

The recommendations were as follows:

Local School Districts

1. That school districts publicly identify the elimination of discrimination against women in promotions to administrative positions as an organizational priority.

2. That school boards actively seek female applicants for the superintendency and other administrative jobs when interviewing for these positions.

3. That school districts survey female personnel for interest in administrative positions and that professional career ladders leading to promotions be designed and implemented for these individuals.

4. That local school districts analyze all personnel policies and eliminate any which directly or indirectly support discriminatory practices, including policies concerned with leaves of absence, pregnancy, part-time employment, and child-care services.

5. That local school districts analyze all educational policies

and programs for their capacity to encourage female students to become professionals and eliminate those which discriminate against female students developing the capacities basic to multiple career options.

6. That local school boards adopt affirmative action plans which are consonant with Executive Order No. 11246, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, and the Equal Pay Act of 1963, all of which prohibit discrimination on the basis of sex in federally assisted programs. For example, Title IX states: "No person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied benefits of, or be subjected to discimination under any education program or activity receiving federal financial assistance."

State Departments of Education

1. That state departments of education, especially chief state school officers, identify hiring professional women for state administrative positions as an organizational priority.

2. That state departments of education publicly recognize the widespread existence of discrimination against women in public education as a problem, and define policies which direct local school districts to establish affirmative action plans which are consonant with Executive Order No. 11246, Title IX of the Education Amendment of 1972, and the Equal Pay Act of 1963.

3. That state departments of education, in order to increase the immediate leadership pool of women in education, analyze alternative means for certification as school and school district administrators.

Federal:

The following recommendations would not only support and assist needed local and state reforms but would also result in more vigorous federal leadership in these areas than is currently the case.

1. That the federal government, especially the National Institute of Education and the U.S. Office of Education, publicly recognize the problem of discrimination against women in public education and identify hiring professional women as a priority for themselves and for the agencies with which they relate.

2. That the National Institute of Education and the U.S. Office of Education review all their funding projects for consistency with existing legislation against discrimination and remove any sex bias from these activities.

3. That the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare adopt compliance guidelines for Title IX of the Education Amendments Act of 1972 which strictly enforce the intent of the legislation.

4. That the HEW's office for civil rights forcefully review and investigate all cases of discrimination in hiring practices which are brought to its attention under the aegis of Executive Order No. 11246.

5. That HEW provide the necessary technical assistance to state departments of education and local educational agencies as they design and implement affirmative action plans consistent with the above legislation.

Schools of Education

1. That schools of education publicly recognize discriminatory practices against women in public education as a problem for the profession and develop affirmative action plans to increase the number of women in leadership positions.

2. That women be recruited for faculty positions in schools of education, including departments of educational administration.

3. That women be recruited as students in programs related to leadership positions in education, including education administration.

4. That all degree programs, including those in educational administration, provide flexible registration and enrollment practices.

5. That women students receive, when necessary, financial support based on individual requirements, independent of marital status.

6. That placement offices identify the employment of women in leadership positions in education as a priority and that it publicize this commitment to all prospective employers.

7. That placement offices actively encourage women in teaching and administrative programs to achieve leadership positions in education.[5]

[5] Lyon, C.D. & Saario, T.N. Women in Public Education: Sexual Discrimination in Promotions. Phi Delta. October 1973, pp. 120-123.

Appendix A
Printed Material for Workshop

(not included)